Sea Glass Prompt
By: Olivia Zhang

I was once a sharp piece of glass. I could reminisce about it so clearly, how the sunlight went through my edges, and how my owner would handle me with the utmost gentle care. I used to live high on a shelf, or perhaps a part of a bottle–I can't remember anymore. It had been years since I was one piece, since I was whole. Maybe inside me was something sweet, or bitter. It doesn't matter now. I used to be wanted–that feeling again of being complete.

And one day, everything came crashing down.

There was a fall. A crash. The sound of myself breaking rang louder than the waves that would come for me later. People around me flinched. They weren't worried for me, but for the trouble I had caused. The mess I made. They swept me aside, called me dangerous–sharp and unusable. And for a while, I believed them. I was hurt, being stepped over, ignored, and kicked into the gutter. I exploded into a million pieces, and the questions flooded my head. *Why wasn't I worth the effort? Why did I have to break? What if someone saw me for what I could be now, instead of what I once was?* The details blur. But I figured that this would be a new beginning.

My story definitely didn't end in the trash. I traveled with the wind and rain. Eventually, the ocean opened its wide blue arms and took me in. That was the start of my new journey.

At first, I fought it. I screamed with every tide and wave, lashed out with anger, hoping someone might find me, fix me, put me back together. But no one came. The salt crept into me, the sand bit at my corners, and the ocean—it never gave up. All around me were other fragments—once rough looking, now smooth. Pieces of cobalt and amber and frosted white, old bits of lives lost and forgotten. It was like they experienced this thousands of times before. We bumped into one another, our shoulders touched with quiet understanding. No words–because we were all survivors of the same thing–shattering.

Years passed. Decades, maybe. I softened. My anger deteriorated. My sharpness wore away until there was nothing left to cut with. I learned to let the water shape me.

One day, the sea let me go. I was in the sunlight, half-buried in warm sand, waiting for someone to see me not as broken, but as beautiful.

For as long as I could remember, I waited for someone to come. And someone did. You did.

Your shadow lingered over–I was scared you would hurt me just like how they did before. Instead, your fingers brushed over me gently, lifting me into the light. When your hand rubbed against the etched words on my back, I felt joy. Maybe you would be that person who would take me. The look on your face said it all–you didn't ask what I once was—you only looked at who I had become. You didn't see trash. You didn't see the loss. You saw me, blue and shiny, smoothed by time and tide.

For a moment, I thought you might keep me. I was hopeful. Maybe you would tuck me into a pocket. Give me a new story. But instead, you set me down again, gently, like something that could be found again. Your eyes lit up, as if saying, "I see you. You matter. Hopefully someone else will see you too." And so I wait there, in the sand, not as something broken, but as something changed. Soft, strong, and most importantly, I was a shard that was seen as no longer dangerous.

I was once sharp, but I am no longer. But I shine in ways I never did before. And I will keep shining until someone else is ready to find me.